



Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



Statement from the Council of Bishops
Friday, December 31, 2021

UMC BISHOPS MOURN ARCHBISHOP TUTU

It is with great sadness that we, the Bishops of The United Methodist Church, join the world in mourning the death of Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu, our Anglican colleague. In the midst of grief, we also celebrate the life of one who did not hesitate to use the gospel to advocate for human rights in South Africa and throughout the globe.

Archbishop Tutu worked to introduce an integrated theological perspective that was born in the crucible of struggle and oppression during Apartheid in South Africa and used the gospel as a mandate to understand Christ as liberator of the oppressed.

So, as we mourn his passing, we also honor Archbishop Tutu, who will be buried tomorrow at the church where he used his pulpit to preach for better relationships not only in South Africa but the world as a whole.

As Easter people, we are reminded of Jesus' promise: "I am the resurrection and I am life; those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11:25)

As a leader who truly embraced the theology that "faith without works is dead," Archbishop Tutu embodied true servanthood. It is no wonder that his quest for human rights for all of God's people won him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 as a true advocate for peaceful reconciliation, guiding South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Archbishop Tutu had the moral strength, moral courage and clarity to take a stand for the rights of humanity and sought equality for all of God's people regardless of race, gender or economic status. His spiritual leadership will remain a living example to all of us.

We pray that Archbishop Tutu's life and witness will inspire all world leaders today with his courage to build a world that is free of discrimination and hatred; and continue to bring light to darkness.

We are certain that as we offer our prayers of comfort, we trust that Jesus has welcomed Archbishop Desmond Tutu with open arms and telling him, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey
President, Council of Bishops

Bishop Sally Dyck
Ecumenical Officer, Council of Bishops